

# Ecological site R010XB024OR JD Warm Ashy Claypan 9-12 PZ

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## **General information**

**Provisional**. A provisional ecological site description has undergone quality control and quality assurance review. It contains a working state and transition model and enough information to identify the ecological site.



Figure 1. Mapped extent

Areas shown in blue indicate the maximum mapped extent of this ecological site. Other ecological sites likely occur within the highlighted areas. It is also possible for this ecological site to occur outside of highlighted areas if detailed soil survey has not been completed or recently updated.

## **Associated sites**

R010XB034OR	JD Loamy 9-12 PZ Loamy 10-12 PZ
R010XB064OR	JD North 9-12 PZ Droughty North 9-12" PZ

### **Similar sites**

R023XY216OR	CLAYPAN 12-16 PZ Clayey 10-16 PZ	
R023XY511OR	JUNIPER LAVA BENCHES 9-12 PZ Juniper Lava Benches	

### Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	Not specified

## **Physiographic features**

This site occurs on hills, ridge slopes, upland terraces, and small basins. Slopes typically range from 0-20 percent but some short slopes may reach 35 percent or more. Elevations range from 3,000 to 4,500 feet.

Landforms	<ul><li>(1) Hill</li><li>(2) Terrace</li><li>(3) Ridge</li></ul>
Elevation	914–1,372 m
Slope	0–20%
Water table depth	152 cm
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

### Table 2. Representative physiographic features

## **Climatic features**

The annual precipitation typically ranges from 10 to 12 inches, but reaches 15 in places. It occurs mainly between the months of October and June, mostly in the form of rain and snow. The soil temperature regime is mesic. The average annual air temperature is 48 degrees F with extreme temperatures ranging from -20 to 108 degrees F. The frost free period is 90 to 120 days. The optimum period for plant growth is late March through June.

### Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	120 days
Freeze-free period (average)	0 days
Precipitation total (average)	305 mm

### Influencing water features

### **Soil features**

The soils of this site are very deep, well-drained, and have a medium textured surface. They are generally formed from loess over colluvium. Permeability is slow and the available water holding capacity (AWC) is 5.0 to 10.0 inches for the profile.

#### Table 4. Representative soil features

Drainage class	Well drained
Permeability class	Slow
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	12.7–25.4 cm

## **Ecological dynamics**

Range in Characteristics:

South aspects will have more bluebunch wheatgrass and less Idaho fescue than typical. North slopes will produce a higher percentage of Idaho fescue and less bluebunch wheatgrass.

Response to Disturbance and Invader Species:

Burning decreases juniper, low sagebrush, bitterbrush, and Idaho fescue. Overgrazing results in a decrease in Idaho fescue and an increase in Sandberg Bluegrass. Further deterioration will result in an increase of squirreltail,

California brome, cheatgrass, pepperweed, collinsia, low larkspur, and deathcamas.

## State and transition model



# GENERAL MODEL FOR COOL-SEASON BUNCHGRASS RANGELANDS

## State 1 Historic Climax Plant Community

## Community 1.1 Historic Climax Plant Community

The potential native plant community is dominated by western juniper, low sagebrush, and Idaho fescue. Bluebunch wheatgrass and Sandberg bluegrass are common along with a variety of forbs such as fleabane, lupine, pussytoes, yarrow, aster, and spreading phlox. Bitterbrush is usually present. Vegetative composition is approximately 75 percent grasses, 5 percent forbs, and 20 percent shrubs/trees. Total foliar cover is about 70 percent, of which 10 percent is tree cover, 10 percent is shrub cover, and 50 percent is grass/forb cover.

Table 5. Annual production by plant type

Plant Type	Low (Kg/Hectare)	Representative Value (Kg/Hectare)	High (Kg/Hectare)
Grass/Grasslike	316	493	666
Shrub/Vine	81	123	168
Forb	27	47	67
Tree	20	28	34
Total	444	691	935

## Additional community tables

Table 6. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production (Kg/Hectare)	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass	Jrass/Grasslike				
1	Perennial, deep-rooted, dominant		t	269–538	
	Idaho fescue	FEID	Festuca idahoensis	202–336	-
	bluebunch wheatgrass	PSSP6	Pseudoroegneria spicata	67–202	_
2	Perennial, deep-rooted	l, sub-dom	inant	7–13	
	sedge	CAREX	Carex	7–13	-
4	Perennial, shallow-roo	ted, sub-d	ominant	40–114	
	Sandberg bluegrass	POSE	Poa secunda	34–101	-
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	Koeleria macrantha	7–13	-
Forb					
7	Perennial, all, dominar	it		20–40	
	fleabane	ERIGE2	Erigeron	7–13	-
	lupine	LUPIN	Lupinus	7–13	-
	spreading phlox	PHDI3	Phlox diffusa	7–13	_
9	Other annual forbs, all			7–27	
	common yarrow	ACMI2	Achillea millefolium	0–6	_
	pussytoes	ANTEN	Antennaria	0–6	_
	buckwheat	ERIOG	Eriogonum	0–6	-
	aster	EUCEP2	Eucephalus	0–6	-
	desertparsley	LOMAT	Lomatium	0–6	_
Shrub	/Vine				
11	Perennial, evergreen, dominant			67–101	
	little sagebrush	ARAR8	Artemisia arbuscula	67–101	-
12	Perennial, evergreen, s	ub-domin	ant	13–67	
	mountain big sagebrush	ARTRV	Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana	7–34	_
	antelope bitterbrush	PUTR2	Purshia tridentata	7–34	_
Tree					
16	Perennial, evergreen, o	lominant		20–34	
	western juniper	JUOC	Juniperus occidentalis	20–34	-

# Animal community

Livestock Grazing:

The key forage species is Idaho fescue. Use should be postponed until the soils are firm enough to avoid trampling damage and soil compaction.

Native Wildlife Associated with the Climax Community:

Mule deer Coyotes Rabbits Rodents

This site offers food and cover for mule deer, rodents, and a variety of birds. It is an important wintering area for mule deer.

## Hydrological functions

The soils of this site have low infiltration rates and high runoff potential.

## Wood products

This site is susceptible to an increase in western juniper. Where this has occured, the site will produce firewood, posts, and specialty products.

## Other information

For range seedings, recommended species include crested wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, secar bluebunch wheatgrass, tall wheatgrass, and sheep fescue. Increase in western juniper and the subsequent competition for moisture will lead to a reduction of availabe forage. Overgrazing can easily reduce ground cover and accelerate soil loss. Improving infiltration and permeability, and reducing runoff should be the immediate goal of juniper and brush control.

## Contributors

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## Rangeland health reference sheet

Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health is a qualitative assessment protocol used to determine ecosystem condition based on benchmark characteristics described in the Reference Sheet. A suite of 17 (or more) indicators are typically considered in an assessment. The ecological site(s) representative of an assessment location must be known prior to applying the protocol and must be verified based on soils and climate. Current plant community cannot be used to identify the ecological site.

Author(s)/participant(s)	Jeff Repp and Bruce Frannsen
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Date	08/06/2012
Approved by	Bob Gillaspy
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

### Indicators

- 1. Number and extent of rills: None, slight to moderate sheet & rill erosion hazard
- 2. Presence of water flow patterns: None
- 3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes: None
- 4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground): 5-15%
- 5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies: None
- 6. Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas: None, slight wind erosion hazard
- 7. Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel): Fine limited movement
- Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages most sites will show a range of values): Moderately resistant to erosion: aggregate stability = 3-5
- 9. Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness): Very deep, well drained silt loams: moderate OM (2-4%)
- 10. Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff: Moderate ground cover (60-70%) and gentle slopes (0-20%) moderately limit rainfall impact and overland flow
- 11. Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site): None
- 12. Functional/Structural Groups (list in order of descending dominance by above-ground annual-production or live foliar cover using symbols: >>, >, = to indicate much greater than, greater than, and equal to):

Dominant: Idaho fescue > Bluebunch wheatgrass > Low sagebrush > other grasses > other shrubs > forbs

Sub-dominant:

Other:

- 13. Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence): Normal decadence and mortality expected
- 14. Average percent litter cover (%) and depth ( in):
- 15. Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annualproduction): Favorable: 800, Normal: 600, Unfavorable: 400 lbs/acre/year at high RSI (HCPC)
- 16. Potential invasive (including noxious) species (native and non-native). List species which BOTH characterize degraded states and have the potential to become a dominant or co-dominant species on the ecological site if their future establishment and growth is not actively controlled by management interventions. Species that become dominant for only one to several years (e.g., short-term response to drought or wildfire) are not invasive plants. Note that unlike other indicators, we are describing what is NOT expected in the reference state for the ecological site: Western Juniper readily invades the site. Cheatgrass and Medusahead invade sites that have lost deep rooted perennial grass functional groups.
- 17. Perennial plant reproductive capability: All species should be capable of reproducing annually